

A PROPOSAL FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE RURAL INVESTMENT FUNDS
TO MAXIMIZE THEIR EFFECTIVENESS FOR RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

A. Distribute the funds to jurisdictions with less than 5,000 population: Cities, Counties (unincorporated areas), tribes.

The legislature recognized that rural areas of the State were lagging the urban areas in economic recovery, thus this program. While the Cities of eastern Oregon are certainly "rural" in comparison to Eugene or Portland, the more rural areas of eastern Oregon are economically depressed in relation to the urban areas here. Maintaining a spirit of the rural development initiative would favor limiting these funds for use by the jurisdictions of less than 5,000 population.

B. Distribute the funds as block grants to the local jurisdictions.

Few of the small communities have staff or trained volunteers capable of maintaining an on going competitive grant process. This always places small communities at a distinct disadvantage for funding distributed on this basis. Block grants based on population or other similar criteria is a fair and effective manner of distributing these funds.

The smaller communities have spent numerous hours of volunteer time assessing their economic needs. These communities are well aware of their opportunities for development. Most if not all have many projects already identified that could be moved ahead immediately if funds were available.

C. Change the orientation of grant administration from policing to facilitation.

If these funds are distributed as block grants as suggested, the need for the lengthy and expensive grant application, distribution and oversight would be eliminated. The \$90,000+ allocated for "administration" could be used to hire three project facilitators. These facilitators could help the jurisdictions design, coordinate and implement their projects.

A personal comment.

It is well past time to stop using the old method of a "possible carrot" for the distribution of public monies. We are no longer amused by the efforts of government bureaucracies to have us pay homage to [their] grants. These monies belong in our communities because they came from our communities. We can and will use them appropriately for the enhancement of our communities and the benefit of our people.

Furthermore, it should be shouted from the house tops that lottery dollars are in NO WAY economic development dollars. The lottery drains upwards of \$200,000 from our community in Elgin each year! This is one economic development we don't need. However, as long as this blight lasts, we have a right to our fair share of the wreckage without the pretence of a gift from on high.

Joe Garlitz

NORTHEAST OREGON ALLIANCE BOARD
RURAL ACTION PLAN SURVEY

Identified By Elgin 2010 Committee 1/8/96

TOP COMMUNITY/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

1. Rysdam building for business/office cluster
2. Cottage industries
3. Industrial park
4. Tourism/Hunaha RV Park and viewing station-Witty Park and reader board
5. Recreation
6. On route to Wallowa Lake

TOP NEEDS/LIABILITIES WE NEED TO ADDRESS

1. Money (lack of)/Revolving loan fund
2. Housing
3. Land for Industrial Park
4. Domestic rubbish
5. Insensitive bank for business loans

ELGIN'S PROJECT PRIORITY FOR RURAL INVESTMENT FUND

1. Grant writing assistance/business development technical assistance (needed equally)
2. Business loans/grants
3. Housing development/rehabilitation finance
4. Community capital improvement (streets, sidewalks, sewage)
5. Tourism/community marketing plans
6. Downtown revitalization
7. Natural resource planning/technical assistance
8. Job training/retraining
9. School to work training/Student internships
10. Land use planning assistance
11. Sewer/water project funding (done)
12. Community planning assistance (done)
13. (combined the first two as # 1)